



Tom Barrett
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Editor
Milwaukee Journal Sentinel
P.O. Box 371
Milwaukee, WI 53201

Dear Editor:

The concerns expressed in the November 13th front page article regarding mercury in flu shots (“Most flu shots contain mercury”) deserved to be put into better context. Readers should understand that a thimerosal-containing flu shot contains just 25 micrograms of mercury, which is the same amount of mercury you would get by eating *a single can of tuna*. Other fish, such as shark and swordfish, contain even higher amounts of mercury.

Furthermore, before concluding that “few know” about mercury in flu shots, the article should have noted that every patient who gets an influenza vaccine is given the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s “Vaccine Information Statement,” which clearly indicates that some flu shots contain mercury in the form of thimerosal.

While the vaccine industry works to eliminate thimerosal from flu shots (as it has already done for all other childhood vaccines), people should remember that flu shots offer safe and effective protection against an illness that is no laughing matter. Influenza puts the young, the elderly and the immune-suppressed at risk for serious illness. Instead of scaring readers, appropriate news coverage should help them weigh risks and make informed decisions.

Sincerely,

Bevan K. Baker, FACHE
Commissioner of Health